

LETTERS TO A QUAKER FRIEND

ON

BAPTISM.

BY

WILLIAM TAYLOR,

AUTHOR OF "CHRISTIAN ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AFRICA," "FOUR
YEARS' CAMPAIGN IN INDIA," "OUR SOUTH
AMERICAN COUSINS," ETC.



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PREFACE.

()N the eve of my departure from New York for Brazil I received a letter from a Quaker Friend, a personal friend of mine, and a very dear brother in Christ. At the close of his letter he requested me to write him on the subject of baptism.

During my short sojourn in Brazil, opening new fields for Christian workers, I had no time to spare for correspondence with any body outside of my own immediate line of work: but on my return voyage, as a recreation from the study of the Portuguese language in which I was engaged, I snatched the opportunity of responding to the request of my Quaker brother. I meant to make short work of it, but the inspiration came upon me, and what I designed to be a private letter, grew, by a series of letters, into a book for the benefit of others as well. I have not aimed to treat the

subject critically nor polemically, and much that I have written is merely suggestive, and not exhaustive, and in the familiar style of personal correspondence with a dear friend. I had no book of reference, but the one authoritative Book, which, therefore, was the only one I required.

I have written plainly what I am sure is the teaching of God on the subject of baptism. If it shall have the effect of provoking adverse criticism, let it be kept in mind that my heart is ever full of love for all God's children, of whatever name. If any should wish to debate with me, I beg leave in advance to decline for three reasons: 1. No time; 2. No inclination; 3. No conviction of duty to induce me to spend five minutes in debating with any body. I have written all these letters on my knee as I sat on the deck of a deeply laden vessel sluiced daily fore and aft by dashing seas, occasioned by the two hurricanes which sent the Vera Cruz and many other noble ships and their passengers and crews to a watery grave.

WILLIAM TAYLOR.

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LETTERS

TO A QUAKER FRIEND ON BAPTISM.

I.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH MAN.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS: In accordance with your request, I propose to write you a few plain words on the subject of Christian baptism. You will allow me to begin at the beginning.

God is a king; we are his subjects. God is a father; "we are the offspring of God." Our twofold relation to him involves inherently the mutual obligations growing out of such relationships. Hence the necessity and the fact of a revelation from God, and the inspired record of those revelations, for the benefit of all the successive generations of the human family.

These inspired Scriptures contain the history of our origin, our fall and forfeiture by sin, and of God's provision of redemption and restoration in Christ, and embody a COVENANT of GRACE, with its overtures of love and mercy to a fallen world. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Acts xvii, 26.

All nations of men, therefore, bear the same natural relations to God; hence all have the same claims on his paternal regard and sympathy.

As it was "by the disobedience of one" that "judgment came upon all men to condemnation," and that one being the progenitor of the whole race of man, all his descendants stood on the same footing in relation to God; hence what he would provide essentially for one, he would provide for all. This agrees with the fact as revealed: "Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the right-

eousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. v, 18.

The covenant is one; the parties are two—God and man.

The covenant embraced the altered mutual relations of the two parties, all God's gracious provisions and promises in Christ, and all man's obligations to God.

Coming down through the patriarchal ages, we see Abraham at the front as a representative of the race—the party of the second part.

Abraham was informed that the promised "seed of the woman," who would bruise the serpent's head, and bring deliverance to the captives of sin and Satan, should proceed through him, and God entered into an everlasting covenant with him, giving the broad significance of his covenant provisions by the declaration, "In thy seed shall all the nations and all the families of the earth be blessed."

The covenant compassed a kingdom, an everlasting kingdom; the "seed," which was

Christ, its King; a priesthood, and the Anointed of God, its great High-priest.

The covenant with Abraham contained, to be sure, a clause covering certain temporalities pertaining to the Jewish nation, but the covenant proper was purely spiritual, and in its purpose and provisions impartial, universal, and eternal.

The temporalities of the covenant embraced a gorgeous ritual of ceremonies, sacrifices, and types, administered under the Aaronic priesthood, all of which were but “a shadow of good things to come.” The substance was in Christ, who did not appear at the beginning but at the ending of all those temporal things. “But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

Abraham in person did not receive the temporal benefits of the covenant, but he did re-

ceive the spiritual, “the righteousness which is by faith,” and “the uttermost” salvation promised.

The divinely-attested records of this “everlasting covenant,” contained in the two series of Holy Scriptures, called the Old and New Testaments, or covenants, all pertain to the one covenant. The “life and immortality” brought so clearly to light in the “new,” contrasted with the receding shadowy types of the “old,” give rise to the designation *old* and *new* covenants, but the covenant is substantially one.

The repealed portions of the old were merely local, typical, ceremonial, which were in their nature and design temporary, and were not indeed formally repealed, but became obsolete, because, like the scaffolding of the finished superstructure, of no further practical utility. All moral laws and vital principles, being indestructible, survive and take vantage-ground under the “new covenant.”

II.

COVENANT SEALS.

DEAR BROTHER: We speak now of the visible "seal" of personal indenture and initiation into covenant relations with God. This seal must not be confounded with the seals by which the covenant itself was attested "both by signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his will," and ratified by "the blood of the everlasting covenant." Let us hear God's own words on this subject: "When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and I will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me,

behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. [“Father of a great multitude,” the “great multitude which no man can number” who follow Abraham’s faith. So we see in him the covenant representative of the human family then, and through all subsequent time.] “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and

thy seed after thee ; every man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin ; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised : and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people ; he hath broken my covenant." Gen. xvii, 1-14.

Abram more than a quarter of a century before this event "believed God," and entered into spiritual communion with him under the provisions of the covenant, which was rooted in God's "eternal purpose ;" but now Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal

of the righteousness of faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, . . . but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

Rom. iv, 11, 12.

Circumcision, therefore, is called a "seal," and a "sign," and "a token." If these three names indicate a threefold shade of meaning, it may be in this: the "seal," the tangible act and fact of circumcision in each individual case; the "sign," the signification of this tangible fact, embracing the two parties and their mutual covenant relationship, with all God's covenant pledges to man, and all man's covenant obligations to God; the third, like the rainbow "token," a reminder of God's immutable fidelity to all who enter into covenant with him, and maintain their covenant loyalty to him.

Let us keep in mind the fact that this covenant, in its high spiritual purpose and provis-

ions, embraced impartially all “the nations,” and all “the families of the earth,” “that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles.” For “to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” Gal. iii, 14, 16, 17. Thus for four hundred and thirty years circumcision was the sign pre-eminently of the spiritual part of the covenant; but when the Jewish nation was organized and the laws of Moses revealed, its significance was naturally narrowed to represent mainly the temporalities of the covenant in relation to the Jewish nation. So at this juncture God instituted baptism to stand as a monumental prophetic “sign” of his covenant in its universal application to “all the nations of the earth.”

From that time circumcision became more and more exclusively Jewish, till ultimately it was superseded by baptism by order of Him who said to his apostles, “ All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you : and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Matt. xxviii, 18-20.

III.

INSTITUTION OF BAPTISM.

DEAR BROTHER: We come now to speak more directly of this institution. I use this word in its twofold significance: 1. Act of establishing; 2. System established. Neither of us attach much importance to the opinions of mere men on this subject. We want to find out more definitely what the men said about it who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

St. Paul, in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, institutes a comparison between "the Church in the wilderness" and the Church in Corinth.

The members of the first, after due preparation, were baptized; so, also, the Church in Corinth. The first were answerable for all the responsibilities to God and man involved

in their baptismal covenant; so the second. The first had, in an ever-present Christ, an adequate available supply for every demand of each and all the members—spiritual meat, spiritual drink, and every thing requisite; so the second. The first made a most promising start, and all ran well for a season; so the second. Later great apostasies occurred in the Church in the wilderness; so in the Corinthian Church. Those apostasies in the wilderness Church involved most disastrous results, hence the warnings drawn for the admonition of the Church in Corinth, and the exhortation to unswerving fidelity to the obligations involved in their baptismal covenant with God. This point Paul illustrates by his own example, saying, “ Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.” In the Olympic contests, no matter

how well a man ran or fought, if his competitor excelled, number two lost all; no such uncertainty in the Christian struggle, where all may win, and all certainly shall win, if they follow Paul's example. So he says, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased." They failed to fulfill their baptismal obligations to God, and hence forfeited and precluded his baptismal

promises to them, and hence “they were overthrown in the wilderness.” “Now these things were our examples,” recorded for our warning, “to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; . . . neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.” And so on the parallel runs, striking all the covenant derelictions of “some” of the members of the Church in Corinth by corresponding examples of “some of them” who were baptized members of the Church in the wilderness with their solemn warnings, introducing also the parallel between the passover of the first, and the same feast under a new form and name under the gospel. “I speak as to

wise men," Paul continues; "judge ye what I say." "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" 1 Cor. ix, 25-27; x, 1-16.

The authoritative-teaching fact, in this parallel of facts, to which I call special attention, is the institution of baptism at the Red Sea. Paul wrote this some thirty years after baptism had become a historic fact in the Church of Christ; so he knew exactly what he was talking about. Hence, the word "baptized," as used by him, contained its full Christian significance, and the very meaning it had in God's mind when he instituted and administered it at the Red Sea.

God's primary revelations—"his ways" and "his acts," in the form of stupendous, tangible, miraculous facts—furnished a foundation for his subsequent oral teachings and commands, and a reliable key of interpretation

of his oral teachings and metaphorical references.

For example, in God's first message to Israel from Mount Sinai he says, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." Exod. xix, 4. This beautiful metaphor was readily interpreted by the primary facts so fresh in their minds ; but, without that key of interpretation, the statement might be construed to mean that, in their extremity, the Lord came down into the camp like a great eagle, and the whole host, with their herds, climbed up on to his back, and then he spread his great wings, and, bearing them aloft, flew across the sea. So any figurative allusion to baptism should be interpreted by the primary facts defining it.

IV.

FACTS ACCOMPANYING THE INSTITUTION OF
BAPTISM.

DEAR BROTHER: This letter may be considered an episode from our direct line of investigation, but it will contain illustrative facts bearing on our subject. Let me give you a topographical illustration of the site on which the sublime scene was enacted, from which we shall, in a subsequent letter, gather our facts—God's facts—and learn their teaching force.

On one of my voyages up the Red Sea, in the steamship Australia, of the Peninsular and Oriental line, coming near the crossing place of the Israelites, the master, Captain Murray, called me to stand beside him “on the bridge.” Then said he: “Now watch the change in the color of the water, and you will see where Moses and the host passed over.” If the cap-

tain had been an outside worldling I would have taken it that he was getting off a sceptical jest; but, knowing him to be a Christian, as well as a gentleman, I gave earnest heed to his remarks as in our progress he pointed to the changing color of the sea and to the surrounding scenery.

Said he: "Eighteen years ago, on my first voyage up this sea, and near this spot, I had my leadsman—a splendid sailor, who had traversed these waters for years before—taking the soundings. I listened most attentively to his report with each throw of the lead. He went on singing out, 'Fourteen fathoms! fourteen fathoms!' for some time, when all of a sudden I heard him call, 'Five fathoms!' and then, 'Four fathoms!' and I was frightened, and shouted, 'What is that you say? four fathoms?'

"'Yes, captain, but no fear, we'll soon get into deep water again.'

"So he went on singing out 'Four fathoms' for what seemed to me a long time, yet not

long in fact, when he reported, 'five fathoms, eight fathoms, ten fathoms, fourteen fathoms,' and so on we went; but I was so impressed by that incident that I subsequently took boats and men and made a careful survey of that part of the sea from shore to shore, it being about four miles wide at that point.

"By our soundings we defined a bar extending from that promontory which is the end of Jebel Atakah, or Mount of Deliverance, clear across the sea, on which the water is about twenty-two feet deep at low tide, while north and south of the bar the sea is eighty feet in depth.

"The bar is half a mile in width, and all over about that depth, shallowing with the slope of each shore.* That is doubtless the high-way on which the Israelites marched through the sea, made dry by the miraculous power of God. Of course, he could have divided the deep wa-

* If any body doubts this I refer him to the official charts of Great Britain.

ters just as easily ; but for such a host to have gone down eighty feet, and pulled up again on the opposite side, would have made heavy work, especially for the mothers and the little ones ; but a descent of twenty-two feet was easy enough.

“ I also explored that mountain, *Jebel Atakah*, from end to end. It is only about eight miles in length, but so precipitous that, while a man can climb up at almost any part, such a mixed concourse of people could not by any possibility. So there you can see the vortex into which the *Israelites* were wedged beyond the human possibility of escape. It is about seven miles from the promontory to *Suez*. As soon as the host passed the upper end of the sea, a little above *Suez*, they were ‘entangled in the land.’ Before that, had God permitted, they could have gone into *Arabia* on dry land, but now their retreat on the eastward was cut off by the sea, and on the westward by that impassable mountain, while the mouth of the

vortex, about seven miles wide, was closed in by the advancing war chariots and armies of Egypt; so they were forced to trust to God alone for deliverance or to be cut to pieces by their enemies."

I looked and listened, and learned lessons of practical knowledge from that good man of the sea, whose mind had never been muddled by the abstract speculations of theological tinkers.

So much for the site; now for the scene, with its teaching facts, as recorded by the man of God who witnessed them. That despairing host contained over six hundred thousand men twenty years old and upward, and as many women of that age and upward as men; even as "in the beginning" God created man "male and female," and does so still, in about equal numbers, and so, doubtless, all through the intervening ages. There were also about as many boys under twenty as men over that age, and as many girls as boys; so that four

times six hundred thousand will give us, with approximate certainty, the numerical dimensions of the “congregation.” I may add that the tribe of Levi and the camp-followers are not included in these aggregates; so that there were at least two and a half millions of souls under the command and care of Moses, with their herds of cattle and sheep. There we may see them crowded together in the greatest confusion. As they realize their impending peril, their cries of despair become hideous. The darkness of night, apparently their last night, is spreading its mantle over them: the sea, stirred by an “east wind,” on one flank, the impassable mountain on the other, and the vengeful forces of Pharaoh advancing in the rear, and no outlet in front. So they cry to God in despair, and cry against Moses in bitter murmurings.

All along the lines the bewildered people are talking to Moses as though he were listening in every part of the camp, shouting

in bitter reproach, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians. For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.”

Moses tries to reassure them, saying, “Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” Meantime Moses is praying and waiting for God’s order to advance, or give some mighty token of deliverance, for his faith falters not.

All this is to prepare the people for a revelation of God. Not a revelation in words about God—you may as well talk to the sea—

a revelation of God in mighty deeds. So by God's most effective and understandable method of teaching he is going to convince the whole host together what they had heard with their ears but learned not as a fact, that he is the God of the heavens, of the earth, and of the sea; the Creator, preserver, and Judge of men and of nations. He is about to manifest his justice in the execution of Pharaoh and his heathen hordes of guilty men, and show his sovereign power and grace by the deliverance of his oppressed people, and thus prepare them for baptismal initiation into covenant relations with himself.

So at the command of the Lord, Moses lifts his rod and stretches "out his hand over the sea," when God, by a miracle, divides the waters, and lays bare the highway in the deep, half a mile in width and from shore to shore; a strong hot wind from the east sweeps through this highway of the king between its towering watery walls, all that night, and dries up the

mud, and solidifies the sand, so that his people may cross the sea “dry shod.”

Meantime “the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.”

At the dawn of the morning we see messengers running with orders from Moses to his generals in every part of the vast encampment, while the Egyptians, awed by the overshadowing presence of the angel of the Lord, still remain in darkness and wait for the coming day.

Now we see the standard of Judah moving seaward. Under it are the rank and file of three tribes, aggregating an army of 186,400 soldiers, besides their families and their flocks. This

division is under the command of General Nahshon, son of Amminadab. We see them crossing the sea for miles, till the last file of soldiers and herd of their cattle leave the shore of Egypt.

Immediately we see the standard of Reuben, with an army of 151,450 men, with their families, advancing under the command of General Elizur. The afternoon comes before they all clear the near shore.

Next comes the standard of Ephraim, with 108,100 soldiers, with their families and effects, led by General Elishama.

The sun has gone down, the late hours of the night are upon us, but by the bright light of the pillar of fire from the rear we see the standard of Dan, with 157,600 men, under General Ahiezer; this last division of the grand army of Israel falls into line, with their families and bleating herds.

In the dead of the night the pillar of fire removes to the front; and now we hear the

rumbling thunder of Pharaoh's six hundred war chariots, and "all the chariots of Egypt," and see the king and his troops pursuing, like unchained tigers rushing for the prey. They crowd down into the sea till the whole heathen host are brought between the towering walls of water. The cup of their iniquity is full. Sinners, however wicked, are spared in mercy till they destroy utterly their spiritual susceptibilities. Then as there is no possibility of their salvation, and as their continuance among men is so damaging to others who yet may be saved, justice to them and mercy to the living require their immediate removal to the "place prepared for the devil and his angels," where they can do no further damage to the living; unless God sees reason for extending the lives of such sufficiently compensative to the world to justify an extension of a hopeless life.

Pharaoh was an example of this sort. God said to him, by the mouth of Moses, "Now I

will stretch out my hand, that I may smite thee and thy people with pestilence; and thou shalt be cut off from the earth. And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for [margin, *made thee stand*] to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." Exod. ix, 15, 16.

In the ordinary course of justice he should have been sent to his place long before, but after he had crossed the fatal lines of self-destruction God raised him up and made him to stand, till in these revelations of his mercy and justice, as the Sovereign of the world, he might make a public example of him and his for the instruction and warning of mankind "throughout all the earth."

So now the hour of doom came to those incorrigible rejecters of God's love and mercy.

"In the morning watch," when all Israel's host, except the rear-guard of the standard of Dan, had reached the Arabian shore, and

Pharaoh and his host had all left the shores of Egypt, and were now in hot pursuit, “the Lord thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered his voice. And he sent out arrows, and scattered them ; lightning, and discomfited them.” 2 Sam. xxii, 14. David, reviewing this scene five hundred years after, in reverent address to the God of Israel, says, ‘Thou art the God that doest wonders : thou hast declared thy strength among the people. Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee ; they were afraid : the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water : the skies sent out a sound : thine arrows also went abroad. The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven : the lightnings lightened the world : the earth trembled and shook. Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the

hand of Moses and Aaron.” Psalm Ixxvii, 14–20.

Thus God opened his storm batteries upon the maddened hosts of Egypt. He sent out his arrows—streams of streak lightning—which melted the very axles of their chariots, “and took off their chariot wheels”—thunderbolts which hushed forever the voice of the king and his commanders, so that the surviving Egyptians cried one to another, “Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians.” But the great “path” was so choked up with broken chariots and thunder-stricken legions of men that not one escaped. This occurred “in the morning watch,” a little before day. A little later, as the day dawned, “the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the sea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to

his strength when the morning appeared. . . . And the waters returned, and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them." Exod. xiv, 26-28.

We note here that at least twenty-four hours were occupied in the transit of the whole host of Israel. The "path" on which they crossed dry-shod was about half a mile wide, the present width of the bar; for illustration, say eight hundred yards, in round numbers. Give each one a walking width of eighteen inches, that will give us a rank of one thousand six hundred persons; give one minute for each rank of one thousand six hundred, including women, children, and the herds, to get into line, and advance. Thus in one hour ninety-six thousand persons would be dispatched—say, in round numbers, one hundred thousand persons. Twenty-four hours would thus get under way two million four

hundred thousand; so that approximately we see the width of the path, at half a mile, to be in proportion to the number of the host and the time occupied by their passage.

Then, with the rising glory of that ever-memorable morning, we hear “the song of Moses,” typical of “the song of the Lamb”—both songs of redemption by the mighty power of God. The song of Moses, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, recounts the twofold destruction by fire and flood, by which their pursuers were swept from the earth. In the mighty acclaim of millions of voices they sing, “The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. . . . Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.” Vers. 3-7. Thus the dashing to pieces and consuming as stubble

were by the thunder-bolts “in the morning watch,” when the Lord “troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels.” Exod. xiv, 24, 25.

The prophetess Miriam led the voices of the women in that song. Eighty years before she watched the infant Moses, her baby brother, when left on the banks of the Nile to die. Now she leads half a million of the daughters of Abraham along the lines of weeping and singing soldiers, shouting as they advance, “Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

This jubilant host had just been baptized, and had just proved the faithfulness and force with which God fulfills his covenant engagements. The thing that God administered, called baptism, was not something “figuring baptism,” but they were really, as St. Paul states, “baptized.” That was one of the great events of that great occasion. From this nar-

rative, and inspired allusions to it, we can gather the primary facts defining the institution and first administration of baptism, and they will furnish a key of interpretation of all subsequent allusions to it.

V.

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM.

DEAR BROTHER: What may we learn from the teaching facts of this narrative, and the inspired references to it on the subject of baptism?

First, that the Israelites "were baptized."

Second, that they "all were baptized."

Third, that the baptizing took place at the sea, some time during the twenty-four hours of their passage.

These facts are matters of definite statement by St. Paul, as we have before seen.

These open to us a field, not of speculative opinions, but legitimate conclusions from reliable evidence, furnishing a matter-of-fact basis of faith sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes, concerning

i. Their preparation for baptism.

2. The subjects to whom it was administered.
3. The original administrator.
4. The mode of its administration.

We come, then, to inquire what is God's standard of preparation in the subject for baptism?

Abraham "received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised." Rom. iv, 11.

Abraham was "justified by faith, and had peace with God" prior to his circumcision, and his being set forth as "the father of them that believe" gives his example the force of a model, and hence a teaching fact indicating God's mind on that point. The legal meaning of justification is expressed by the modern law term, acquittal. "Thou shalt justify the righteous and condemn the wicked," is the order of Moses to the magistrate. In its evangelical use it implies a pardon accompanying the judicial

acquitting decision of “God, who justifieth,” and is immediately followed by a notification of the Holy Spirit to the spirit of the believing penitent; the subjugation of his carnal lusts, and the infusion of divine life into his dead soul. He is then acquitted, pardoned, adopted into God’s household, notified of it, and regenerated. That is a summary of the righteousness which is by faith, as experienced by an adult, or one responsible and previously under condemnation. Thus Paul says, “ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” “This grace wherein we stand” is the grace of a justified relation to God, maintained by faith, and manifested by the fruits of a holy life.

Thus justification by faith implies, *first*, the acquitting act of the Judge; and, *secondly*, the acquitted relation in which we stand. It is in this second sense that James used the

term in application to Abraham some fifty years after he was justified by faith in the first place. In the offering of Isaac he demonstrated the fact that he stood in a justified relation to God, maintained by a principle of obedience, that swerved not under any possibility of trial, and a faith which received and trusted Jehovah without wavering; hence the fruits in the form of good works, which proved him to be righteous.

A justified relation to God, therefore, is his test qualification for baptism, as it was for circumcision.

How about the Jew boy of eight days?

“ By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” The little children all stand in a justified relation to God till they forfeit it by transgressing the law of God, and thus come under condemnation. We will explain this further on.

God could not put the baptism of an adult before his justification by faith, without opening a miserable way-station in which multitudes would stop, instead of pressing their way into the kingdom of heaven. Hence his orders on this subject are explicit and emphatic—always putting faith first—“believe and be baptized.” The examples are many and familiar to all Bible readers, so that I need not repeat them, except to say, that believing, in gospel terminology, is not simply the assent of a patient to the genuineness and adequacy of a doctor’s credentials; but, further, to submit to treatment and receive the physician. “As many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God.” “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.”

1 Pet. i, 8, 9.

Believing the condition, “receiving the end

[or object] of your faith, even the salvation of your souls," the immediate result; all this is embraced in the experience of a true believer. To baptize an adult without this is to apply a right seal to a wrong subject, attesting what does not exist in fact.

But how does this apply to the hosts of Israel?

Well, if the Lord baptized an unsaved people, he did what is contrary to his orders to his ambassadors, which is not at all in accordance with his ways.

Can it be possible that the whole of the Israelites were in a justified relation to God when he baptized them?

Why not? Was not their preliminary training sufficient to bring them to an unreserved surrender to God and an acceptance of Jehovah as the Lord their God, and to trust him to save them from their sins? It is not at all probable that the Philippian jailer had half so much instruction in advance as they had be-

fore they left Goshen. But the jailer was brought into an extremity in which he despaired of life, abandoned the world, and all hope, and in utter desperation was about to commit suicide; suddenly relieved from fear in regard to the life of the body, he waked up to the dreadful peril of his guilty soul, and cried in an agony to God's servants, "What must I do to be saved?"

Paul answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." He did believe, and he and his household were all baptized the same hour.

The Israelites had their dread alarm when they found themselves in a vortex of destruction, and all hope, even of life, perished. That was not the time for baptizing them. Their old sovereign still had the mastery in their hearts. They yielded heart allegiance to him, and not to God, and hence murmured bitterly against Moses for not leaving them in their Egyptian slavery; but in that memorable

“morning watch” their old master was slain, and they were “brought” to God. The same mighty motives and moral forces touched every soul of the host, and simultaneously they surrendered themselves to God, and received Christ, and were acquitted, pardoned, and adopted into God’s family. Then they were ready for baptism, and then God baptized them with water.

Isaiah inquires, “Shall a nation be born at once?” Isa. lxvi, 8.

Why not? The thing is matter of history. The stupendous physical miracles of that occasion were but the tangible drapery of the spiritual salvation of a nation at once.

Hence Moses, accompanied by the voices of probably a million and a half of new-born souls, exultingly sings, “Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? . . . Thou in thy mercy hast led forth thy people which thou hast redeemed:

thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." Exod. xv, 11, 13.

The people were "redeemed" from the condemnation of the law, by the merit and might of Jesus, and led forth by the Almighty into his "holy habitation." Justified by faith, and organized into the visible Church of God under the initiating seal of baptism.

All this accords with St. Paul's statement, "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."

When were they all partakers of that spiritual meat and drink from Christ, if not on the morning of their baptism? Thus at the sea, God taught the people that he was the deliverer both of their bodies and of their souls.

The next great lesson was taught them at Marah, when he healed and sweetened its bit-

ter waters, and showed them that he was their healer. "There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the Lord that healeth thee." Exod. xv, 25, 26.

He was not simply advertising himself as a doctor to cure their bodily maladies. All those horrible diseases of the Egyptians were, in common with all diseases, the effects of sin, but were specially types of sin in the soul, and the healing of his people and their exemption henceforth are typical of the healing work that must follow the new birth as the foundation of a Christlike character. A failure at this point is fatal. Spiritual decline must follow, and moral diseases regain their sway in the soul,

and such condemnation will follow, as Moses indicates when he says, “The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed.” Deut. xxviii, 27. Not “the seven-year-old itch,” but an itch that cannot be healed. These represent the incurable lusts of the flesh that will fasten upon all unhealed souls.

The regenerating Spirit inspires beneath the ribs of death the throes of a new life, but that life must be preserved and developed by the healing power of the holy Sanctifier. If we walk in the increasing light that God sheds along the path of his obedient children, and submit wholly to his treatment, they will realize indeed that “he healeth the broken in heart.”

Then such can say with David, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases.”

The Israelites all experienced the first at the sea, and they should all have taken God at his word and experienced the second, the healing, at Marah.

At the Wilderness of Sin God taught them that he was their feeder. Two and a half millions of people in the desert; their commissariat stores all exhausted.

In the recent famine in the Madras Presidency of India, though the British India government made all haste by all means to send supplies to the destitute, yet half a million of them starved to death before relief could reach them. But He who openeth his hand “and satisfieth the desire of every living thing,” rained food upon the Israelites in copious supplies in a single dew-fall, which was a type of his abundant supply of “spiritual meat” “and spiritual drink” for their souls.

At Rephidim he taught them that he was their waterer when a river gushed from the smitten rock typical of the “spiritual Rock

that followed them; and that Rock was Christ.'

At Rephidim he also taught them that he was their defense when he drove back the Amalekites. These are the five lessons that all God's children must learn and carry into saving effect, or fail to fulfill their baptismal covenant with God, and, hence, to realize the fulfillment of his covenant pledges to them.

The Israelites all got a fair start, but the most of them, probably, failed to follow the lesson at Marah. All such were murmurers when hunger and thirst pressed hard upon them, and many loyal ones, indeed all, in their great extremity, gave way more or less to despondency; not as a willful departure from God, but an impulse of desponding grief.

Upon the whole, they got on so well under the circumstances surrounding them, that when God speaks to them from Sinai, he utters no reproofs, but says, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on

eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." Exod. xix, 4-6. The words of a Father to his children.

Still later, after they had received the ten commandments from the mouth of God, and after Moses had been four times in the mount with God, and had written a long code of moral laws, when he read the laws he had written to the congregation, they responded with one accord, "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

But many of them neglected the five primary lessons God had impressed upon them,

and gradually lost their strength to resist temptation or do the will of God, and during the long absence of Moses and Joshua in the mount they sank into that dreadful apostasy which so scandalized the Church of God.

They were all invited and urged to come out again on the Lord's side, and consecrate themselves anew to him; and the mass of them did so; but three thousand of them had become hopelessly incurable, and were publicly incorrigible, and were cut off by God's order. It was "impossible to renew them again unto repentance," and as a warning example they suffered the extreme penalty of the law against felony.

When I was first in Australia a flock of twenty thousand fine merino sheep were killed and burned by order of the government of Victoria. Why? They had "the incurable scab," and their continuance in life jeopardized all the flocks of the colony. On the

same principle God has to remove contagious moral nuisances.

Well, three thousand was a tremendous falling away.

Yes, but compared with a responsible membership of perhaps a million and a half, it was not so great as it at first sight appears.

There were many others, however, whose repentance was superficial. Hence, when Moses pleaded with God so earnestly and so often to forgive the whole host, as he did at the sea, God replied, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,"—such only as would sincerely "consecrate" themselves, according to his order and invitation.

But did not the six hundred thousand men of war who crossed the sea, and as many women, perish in the wilderness and go to perdition?

No. They died in the wilderness from old age, and the mass of them, with Aaron, Mir-

iam, and Moses, went, we doubt not, from the wilderness to heaven.

In St. Paul's illustrative parallel between the Church in "the wilderness" and "the Church in Corinth," he enumerates their apostasies. In one case, out of his list of five cases, he says, "With many of them God was not well pleased." In the other four he says, "Some of them." So, also, of the Church in Corinth. They had a fair beginning. In his epistles Paul addresses them as "the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.... I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day

of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord."

"But with many of them" God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the wilderness "through their unbelief. "Some of them" were guilty of carnal "strife and divisions." 1 Cor. iii, 3. "Some of them" were "puffed up for one against another." 1 Cor. iv, 6, 18. "Some of them" were guilty of "fornication." 1 Cor. v, 1. "Some of them" went to law against each other, and that before heathen judges. 1 Cor. vi, 1. "Some of them" were fraudulent in their business transactions. 1 Cor. vi, 8. "Some of them" scandalized the Lord's Supper by bringing fermented wine, and got drunk. 1 Cor. xi, 20. Some of the most zealous were so unruly in their public meetings as to require correction by special legislation and discipline.

Disgraceful!

Yes, but let the Holy Ghost write up the

history of our modern Churches, and exhibit their dark spots as publicly as those in the Bible, then, upon a fair comparison, let all who were healed at Marah, and who have been preserved from the diseases of Egypt, fire away at the Jews if they like.

However, it is pretty clear from Paul's showing, that the Church in the wilderness had about as clean a record as the Church in Corinth. The great body of both, considering their early heathen training and associations, were marvelous examples of the saving and preserving power of God—"blameless and harmless—the sons of God without rebuke," but were compassed about and mixed up with many who had "made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience."

Paul could rid his Church of them by "Anathema Maran-atha;" but the Church and nation in the wilderness being identical, they had no way to get rid of apostates but to kill them.

If, then, there was so much saving salt abiding in the “Church in the wilderness,” why were all the adults doomed to die in the desert?

The ostensible reason was that, being a nation of emancipated, ignorant slaves, they did not possess the developed intelligence and national strength of character and unflinching fidelity to God essential to the conquest of Canaan and the accomplishment of their great national mission in the world. They were, indeed, as they confessed, in the face of the self-reliant giants of Canaan and their troops, like a troop of grasshoppers in a hay-field.

If they had all submitted, and fully received the Healer at Marah, and maintained perfect loyalty to God, he would have been able to develop and equip them in a short space of time, and they would have become just what God designed, “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”—every man would have been a Joshua or Caleb; but at God’s time for their

entrance into their promised Canaan they were not ready. What a pity !

Hence God had to modify and adapt his administrative arrangements to their condition. To keep them in school under the cloud for forty years, away from the clash of arms and the temptations of conquest, was probably the only way to secure the spiritual salvation of the mass of them. That, also, gave time for the proper training of a new generation, and the development of a Church and nation that could be depended upon to carry out the divine purposes of their providential mission : and of that Church Moses, in his final farewell, exclaimed, “ Happy art thou, O Israel : who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord ! ” Deut. xxxiii, 29.

I may add, the forty years of disciplinary training for Israel were forty years of grace to the nations of Canaan, to give them, under their announced doom, a last gracious opportunity for repentance.

VI.

MODE OF BAPTISM.

DEAR BROTHER: We have seen that the baptism of the Israelites occurred at the Red Sea, and doubtless during the "morning watch" of their grand deliverance from the bondage of Pharaoh and his master, the devil, and, best of all, from their own sins. By what mode was water baptism applied to them? Was it by the immersion of their bodies into water? We are distinctly informed by frequent repetitions of the fact that they "passed over dry shod." "The children of Israel walked upon dry land in the midst of the sea; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left." Exod. xiv, 29. It could not, therefore, have been by immersion. The Egyptians were immersed but not baptized; the Israelites were baptized but not immersed.

How could it have been administered, in accordance with the historic facts in the case?

We have plain Scripture statement showing how it could occur, and just at the suitable time for its occurrence, and, as I believe, the very mode and fact itself of their baptism. We read in Psalm lxxvii that, at the appropriate time for that part of the great transaction, "the clouds poured out water."

O, that was a shower of rain, a very common occurrence!

Very uncommon in that desert, and the application of it to the host at that hour was very extraordinary and significant, and hence the subject of special inspired reference five hundred years after.

Let us weigh the whole statement of the inspired singer.

1. "Thou art the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

2. "Thou hast with thine arm redeemed

thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

3. “The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

4. “The clouds poured out water; the skies sent out a sound; thine arrows also went abroad.

5. “The voice of thy thunder was in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

6. “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

7. “Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”

“He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.”

The inspired psalmist gives this sublime exhibit of “his ways” and “acts,” and among them was the pouring out of water from the clouds upon his covenanting people. To

make so much of an ordinary rainfall, and under such an inspiration to record the fact that in connection with a great thunder-storm it rained, would it not be ridiculous?

He meant to teach us that it was indeed ordinary water from the clouds, but that the application of it embodied an extraordinary purpose and fact — the water-pouring seal, sign, and token of his covenant with his people, and the enduring mode of the visible reception of believers into covenant relation with God. God thus constituted his regularly-organized visible Church, which was a theme in the song of Moses that day, saying, “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.” Exod. xv, 13. A “holy habitation” there on the sea-shore. And then, in prophetic vision, he sings of the future glory and triumph of the Church of God to abide

forever under the reign of Jehovah: “Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in; in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.” Exod. xv, 17, 18. He speaks of this sanctuary, the dwelling-place of God, into which he would “bring” his people, “and plant” them, as a thing “established.” He was not talking about the “tabernacle,” which was then a thing of the future that he had not yet heard of. He was talking about the Church of God, as visibly organized that day. As the pillar of fire was all darkness to the Egyptians, but light to Israel, so from the thunder-cloud came to the Egyptians the arrows of the Almighty which “consumed them like stubble,” and from the same cloud “the token” of blessing and eternal life to God’s people.

Hence the baptismal element was water.

The mode of its application, sprinkling and pouring, as rain is poured out.

The author, and, in this introduction of it, the administrator, God himself.

The subjects, all who “were under the cloud,” all who “passed through the sea,” says Saint Paul. 1 Cor. x, 1. Hence all the men of the host, all the women, all the boys, all the girls. “The herds also?”

No. They were not parties to the covenant. It simply rained on them, having no more significance than any ordinary shower.

Why was not the baptism of the women and children stated in the Mosaic narrative or in Paul’s allusion to the solemn transaction?

Moses had no occasion to record such a matter-of-course fact, witnessed, experienced, and so well known to the host; and the Corinthians were not “ignorant” that all were eligible to baptism and its benefits—male and female, whether Jew or Greek, on the same footing. This inducting “sign and seal”

of the covenant, thus instituted, and administered by Jehovah, did not of itself regenerate one of them; it has of itself no regenerating power in it; that is obtained direct from “the Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ,” and that experience must be, as we have seen, in God’s appointment, antecedent to the baptism.

This Church, thus organized at the sea, and indentured into visible Church relationship to God by baptism, was itself prophetic of gospel days, and for forty years their baptism at the sea was their sign of the covenant. Any circumcising in the wilderness mixed up with its gospel “patterns of things in the heavens,” as Paul puts it, would have marred its prophetic types of the Gospel.

Was the ordinance of baptism repeated and administered from that time?

The Book does not say so. It was established by Jehovah, and thus became a legalized institution in fundamental Jewish law, so that

when in “the fullness of time” it should be introduced as the exclusive “sign” by Messiah, it should encounter no Jewish debate nor legal obstruction; hence no objections were made to baptism by John, nor by the disciples of Jesus. It stood out as a great historic, prophetic beacon, like the priesthood of Melchisedek. But the historic baptismal “sign” of the covenant, and its significance was kept fresh before the Jewish people through all the intermediate ages. Of the many historic references of subsequent inspired writers to the miraculous events at the Red Sea, they always mention God’s covenant with his people; whereas, from the death of Abraham till the day of baptism at the sea, the word “covenant” is not found in the sacred history; at least I have not seen it. The word “baptism,” of Greek origin, was not then used, as afterward, to designate this institution.

Its mode, as instituted and administered by Jehovah, suggested the appropriate name of

the institution, and its application as “a seal and token” of the covenant, and through the succeeding ages God’s spiritual covenant with men was designated, not as the covenant of circumcision, but the covenant of sprinkling and pouring.

The book does not contain a word about any such sprinkling and pouring prior to the institution of this sacrament at the sea. The blood of the paschal lamb, to be sure, was struck upon the lintel and two side-posts of their doors, typical of the blood of atonement, and insuring them against the stroke of the destroying angel ; but no sprinkling of blood on the people. But from the day of redemption at the sea this sprinkling sign, with its teaching significance, is inseparably associated with the spiritual covenant. The word baptism was subsequently introduced from the Greek language, and became the word to designate the same thing precisely that God instituted at the Red Sea, and was employed

metaphorically to represent our fulfillment of covenant obligations even unto death, as the baptism of suffering, baptism unto death, and to represent also God's fulfillment of his covenant engagements, as baptizing us with the Holy Ghost—"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body," and such like.

So the word "*sprinkling*," through the period of its dispensation, from the redemption covenant at the sea to the baptism of the Son of God, is associated in its metaphorical teaching significance with the institution and application of every covenant type of atonement and cleansing for sin.

I will give but a few illustrative examples: "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord. And Moses

took half of the blood, and put it in basins ; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people : and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.” Exod. xxiv, 4-8. Type of the covenant blood of atonement, and its application to obedient, believing subjects.

Now see the same sprinkling sign to indicate cleansing under covenant provisions as applied to a true type of a poor sinner, the leper, in Lev. xiv: “He shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean.”

Now see Paul’s application of these teaching types in their fulfillment : “ When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and

of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hysop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood ; and without shedding of blood is no remission. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these ; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Heb. ix, 19-24.

Now let us see how this "sprinkling and pouring" sacramental sign, instituted at the sea, is associated with the fulfillment of God's covenant engagements by the operations of his Holy Spirit.

Hear the word of God from the lips of Isaiah concerning Messiah, and his saving mission among men: “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.” Isa. lii, 13, 14.

What a prophetic vision of the suffering Son of God! What a height of exaltation, what a depth of humiliation! What is to be the outcome of all this? “So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider.” Isa. lii, 15. He sprinkled one nation at the Red Sea. “So”—in the coming conquest of his kingdom in fulfillment of covenant pledges concerning “all the nations,” and “all the families of the earth”—“so shall he SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS.”

— A hundred years later we hear the voice of God on the same subject, by the mouth of his Prophet Ezekiel, referring to what is yet prophetic—the final ingathering of the Jews under the gospel “teaching” and “baptizing” of the nations. “I,” says Jehovah, “I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.” Ezek. xxxvi, 24, 25. As he gathered them out of Egypt, and sprinkled clean water upon them at the beginning, so he will gather them out from all countries and bring them anew into Church relationship with himself and “sprinkle clean water upon” them.

What was the spiritual significance of that “sprinkling,” as applied to returning wanderers back to God? God answers:

“ From all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put with-

in you ; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Ezek. xxxvi, 25-27.

Did ever circumcision spiritually signify more than all that ? Did ever baptism, according to God’s definition of it, signify less ?

So much for “the sprinkling ;” now for the “pouring” symbol of the sea. God says by the mouth of Isaiah, “I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground.” Now the spiritual signification : “I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.” Isa. xliv, 3.

And by the mouth of Joel : “It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh ; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.”

We note a marvelous beginning of its ful-

fillment, eight hundred years after, on the great pentecostal day in Jerusalem. Among the Gentiles, also, in the house of Cornelius, when “the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.” Acts x, 44, 48.

The Jewish believers were still in so deep a ditch of narrow national exclusiveness that they could not perceive the wide sweep of God’s “everlasting covenant” with Abraham, embracing “all the nations of the earth,” and hence called Peter to answer at the bar of the Church for his irregularity in

baptizing Gentiles, claiming baptism to be exclusively a Jewish institution. Peter, in his defense, gives the whole story, and adds, “The Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.” The sign and its spiritual signification, as we have them all the way through.

VII.

COINCIDENT SIGNIFICATION OF CIRCUMCISION
AND BAPTISM.

DEAR BROTHER: I will call your attention to a few facts and proofs on the subject of this letter. Circumcision, as we have seen, covered many temporalities which pertain not to baptism.

It had the effect of naturalization papers for proselytes, and was in all cases of natural Jewish birth essential to citizenship in the Jewish nation. Baptism has no such significance in Scripture teaching.

Circumcision was administered to males only, baptism alike to "male and female."

But the spiritual signification of circumcision, while it was the "seal," sign, and "token" of the covenant, is precisely identical with that of baptism.

In the examination of inspired teaching on this subject we will observe that the name of the visible sign is often used metaphorically to express some phase or detail of the broad signification of these signs. Thus God, by Moses, says to his backsliding people: "Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked." Deut. x, 16.

"To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? Behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken." Jer. vi, 10.

"And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut. xxx, 6.

All through we shall see that the signification of circumcision in the individual experience of those who have "the righteousness which is by faith," is identical with the experience indicated by the sprinkling sign: for example,

“Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Ezek. xxxvi, 25-27.

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance,” says John, but “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

Jesus spake unto his disciples, saying, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” Matt. xxviii, 18-20.

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission

of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Acts ii, 41, 42. They repented, believed the testimony, received Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and remained true to their baptismal covenant obligations.

"He is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter." Rom. ii, 29. Paul, writing to the Colossians, shows the spiritual signification of circumcision and of baptism to be precisely the same, saying, "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried

with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses." Col. ii, 10-13.

Those Colossian Christians were in the main Gentiles, who had never been circumcised in the flesh. In the 27th verse of the first chapter Paul speaks of them as Gentiles. Judaizing teachers wanted to circumcise them, Paul would not allow it, and taught that their baptism had the same spiritual signification of circumcision, with none of its Jewish disabilities obliging them to "keep the whole law"—all the laws of Jewish citizenship.

Paul here applies circumcision and baptism (not the mode) to explain the same experience in the same persons, giving their spiritual significance, and showing that they alike mean the fulfillment of the covenant on our part

and on God's part, to the crucifixion, death, and burial of "the old man with his deeds," and the spiritual resurrection of their souls by the baptismal power of the Holy Ghost. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and the circumcision of the heart are in kind the same, and alike belong to the fulfillment of God's part of the covenant in us; but there is no limitation to the continuous fulfillment of his baptismal covenant pledges to us short of eternal glory, if we on our part "obediently keep God's holy will and commandments." Hence Paul exhorts those saved Colossians, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Col. iii, 1-3. Paul makes the same metaphorical use of the terms "circumcision" and "baptism" in his epistle to the Romans, vi, 1-11.

What St. Paul says of circumcision, as a mere ceremony, is equally true of baptism. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature,” (Gal. vi, 15;) and what he says of the absence of circumcision in spiritual covenant union with God is equally true of baptism. “If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?” Rom. ii, 26.

VIII.

BAPTISM OF JESUS.

DEAR BROTHER: Let us carefully consider the teachings of the Book on this interesting subject.

The baptism of Jesus was his initiation into his priestly office. Though a “priest forever after the order of Melchizedek,” he was a Jew by birth and by the obligations of his circumcision, and hence “a debtor to keep the whole law.” Moreover, his claims to priesthood, so ably argued by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews, could not have been established among Jews had he not been inducted into priestly orders according to the law of Moses. His forerunner, the voice “crying in the wilderness,” foretold by Isaiah, seven hundred years before; the messenger proclaimed by Malachi, four hundred years before, sent to “pre-

pare the way of the Lord ;" was the son of Zacharias, in the Aaronic line, and hence the law-approved, God-appointed administrator to do this most honorable service for his Master. Hence, at the age of thirty years, Jesus came to John for his legal investiture of the order of the priesthood. He had reached the legal age of thirty. Luke iii, 23. Hence a duty devolved on him which was then due for the first time, for he would not postpone the discharge of any duty for a day. So he came all the way from Nazareth of Galilee to the Jordan, where John was baptizing, to fulfill this legal requirement of his priesthood.

What was the law in regard to the age for entrance into the office and official responsibilities of the priesthood?

"The Lord spake unto Moses . . . saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, . . . from thirty years old

. . . all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." Num. iv, 1-3, 35, 39, 43, 47.

John was delighted to see Jesus, but when he told him what he had come for, John shrank from such a responsibility. He could and did baptize repentant sinners by the thousand; but here comes to him the sinless man, the Priest divine, and bearer of the sins of the world, so "John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Matt. iii, 14, 15.

What was the law, and ceremonial mode of installation into the priesthood?

"The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein. . . . And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.

And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him ; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office." Exod. xl, 1-13.

So much for the law ; we will next see the administration of it.

" The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread ; and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Moses did as the Lord commanded him ; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." Lev. viii, 1-4.

What a day that was ! The inauguration day of Aaron and of the Aaronic order of priesthood, to be kept up by a succession of his sons through the ages, and yet but a typical priesthood pointing to "the Lion of the

tribe of Judah," and terminating forever in the successor of Melchizedek—an order dating back to the days of Abraham, four hundred years before Aaron was born. "And they truly were many priests," of the Aaronic line, "because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii, 23-25)—The uttermost depths of our need; the uttermost heights of our possibilities for development; the uttermost duration of our godlike, never-ending existence. Glory to God, for ever and ever! Amen!

Come back, my dear brother, and let us look at that vast congregation. See the representative heads of tribes and of families at the front. In the background are two and a half millions of people, all standing in silent awe before the Lord, to witness the greatest cere-

mony of their day. The silence breaks by an utterance from the stentorian voice of Moses, saying to that vast assembly, “This is the thing which the Lord commanded to be done. And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water. And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound it unto him therewith. And he put the breastplate upon him: also he put in the breastplate the Urim and the Thummim. And he put the miter upon his head; also upon the miter, even upon his forefront, did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the Lord commanded Moses. And Moses took the anointing oil, . . . and he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron’s head, and anointed him, to sanctify him.” Lev. viii, 5-12.

Note the coincident points:

1. The age of thirty years. Aaron, of course, had long since passed that age, but

the law applied to the succession of priests and Levites to follow.

2. The washing with water—a ceremonial washing.

3. The anointing. “And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Matt. iii, 16-17.

The two essential parallel acts in the consecration of Aaron and of the divine Priest were the washing and the anointing. Much of the ceremonial in Aaron’s case was typical of the office and work of Christ, so the two named are the two striking coincident points, namely, the ceremonial washing of Jesus and the anointing by the Holy Ghost. The whole transaction was ratified by the voice of God the Father from heaven. Hence we hear him respond to

these claims, “Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God.” Thus his baptismal obligations involved all that was written in the book and contemplated in God’s “eternal purpose” and redemptive plan of mercy for man in Christ.

He thus publicly pledges himself in a baptismal covenant to suffer all, and to do all, on his part involved in such a stupendous undertaking.

“But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark the night that the Lord passed through
Ere he found his sheep that was lost.”

As this dark night was far advanced we hear him exclaim, “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished?” He metaphorically calls that baptism because it was a part of his baptismal obligation.

Jesus said to the ambitious sons of Zebedee, “Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall

drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" The cup with him, like the poison cup of Socrates, indicated the final struggle in fulfillment of his baptismal covenant engagement to die for the people. He drank of it in the garden, in an agony of soul that caused the sweat to flow in drops of blood from the pores of his body. He drained the cup to its dregs on the cross till "reproach broke his heart," and he died.

His baptismal covenant, therefore, covered all that he engaged to do for mankind, and all that the Father had engaged to do for him. Our baptismal covenant covers all our obligations to God, and all God's pledges to us. While, therefore, the obligations involved in Christ's baptism are infinite, the parallel is so complete that the initiating ceremony into the one is the only ceremony suitable for the other, and its name and significance, with the difference noted, the same for the Redeemer and the redeemed.

Moreover, our baptism is designed to induct us into royal priestly orders under him as our great High-priest. There was but one high-priest at a time in the Aaronic line, yet all the sons of Levi were priests, and maintained a subordinate priestly ministration in the house of God. In a broader sense than that indicated in the order of Levi, God said to all the Israelites, If ye will be obedient “ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.” Exod. xix, 5, 6. And Peter says of Christ’s baptized and wholly saved people, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praise of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” 1 Pet. ii, 9. We have an ever-living High-priest, and we are brought into a subordinate yet a royal priestly order with himself, to help in his work of saving the world, and then to be with him, and share his glory for ever and ever.

Again, Christ’s baptism, as an authoritative

fact, established in his Church the sprinkling and pouring ceremony and symbol, instituted at the Red Sea, fifteen hundred years before, just as he rendered vital and enduring the priesthood of Melchizedek. From that hour circumcision, as a spiritual "seal of the righteousness which is by faith," was dead, and baptism, by divine example, sanctioned by God the Father from heaven, became the sacrament of visible initiation into the Church of God. Hence, in his commission to his disciples to go into all the world and disciple all nations, he does not even mention circumcision—it was dead—but his order is to "baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Circumcision remained as a national institution and a legal obligation binding upon all Jews for forty years after that, till the nation was disintegrated, and ceased to be a nation. Hence the Holy Spirit did not require the believing Jews to commit a felony against the

State involving the death penalty, and hence the believing Jews continued to circumcise their children till the old Jew husband was dead, as Paul illustrates it. Then all Jews were as free as the Gentiles in regard to circumcision and its grievous burdens.

Paul's persecutors tried for two years and a half to prove that he had "taught the Jews every-where among the Gentiles not to circumcise their children and keep the law of Moses." It was a slander. They could prove nothing of the sort. If Paul had not circumcised Timothy, his mother being a Jewess, they would have got half a charge against him. Paul was a patriot and loyal to his nation, but he was a Christian minister, and never would allow one of his Gentile converts to be circumcised, but had the whole of them baptized, according to the command of the Lord Jesus, but not as a mere ceremony. They were plainly taught its significance; that it meant self-denial and death—the death of the old man

and his deeds, their old carnal nature ; first by their own act, according to instructions like these : “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth ; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” “Mort” means death, and “mortify” to kill. Thus, while legitimate bodily appetites, with the affections belonging to them, and mental appetencies and their affections, out of which carnal lusts grow, are to be “kept under,” and sanctified to the purposes for which God gave them ; the lusts are to be killed and precluded—killed ignominiously and suddenly by crucifixion. “They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.” Gal. v, 24.

While this death of sinful lusts is by our own will and persistent endeavor, the real destruction of them is the work of the Holy Spirit by an application of the cleansing blood of Jesus. This was taught and illustrated and pressed home to the minds and hearts of

all who entered into the baptismal covenant with God. Thus where it is said, “ The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,” it is also said, “ Having therefore these promises, beloved brethren, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God:” an experience attainable only by the power of the Holy Ghost, with the earnest and unremitting concurrence of the subject. The illustrations of this purifying work are figures of crucifying, as stated; of refining, as saith God by Isaiah: “ Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.” Isa. xlviij, 10, 11.

Thus, in Malachi, announcing the coming of Messiah, are these words: “ He is like a refiner’s fire, and like fullers’ soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and

he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." This has its fulfillment in the royal priesthood of Christ's baptismal host.

All such exhortations were addressed to persons justified by faith and baptized, and who had experienced, in a measure, the washing of regeneration in their hearts. Paul expressed this twofold work under our baptismal covenant thus: "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now, where remission of these is there is no more offering for sin, [no more needed for the sins forgiven; "none of his sins which he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him."] "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us

through the veil, that is to say his flesh; [human eyes saw only the veil, but faith sees the divine Redeemer,] and having a High-priest over the house of God; [the same house of which Moses sang at the sea;] let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Heb. x, 16-22.

Quoting from Jeremiah, and addressing the believing Hebrews, he uses figures familiar to their minds, their old name for baptism—"sprinkling;" and having "remission of sins" under its covenant provisions, they must from the same divine source have entire cleansing of "soul, body, and spirit"—their whole being washed and sanctified to God. Now "unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." Rev. i, 5. All this pardoning and

purifying work belongs to the divine side of the baptismal covenant, and hence its accomplishment in human experience is metaphorically called the baptism of "the Holy Ghost," which may hence be used to express any and every gift received through the Holy Spirit.

Baptism not only means the death of the carnal man, but the death of the physical man, the death of the body, its entire devotion to God, according to his baptismal covenant—"a living sacrifice," to be offered up in martyrdom for Christ's sake, or be used up in a life of service, till discharged by means of natural death, or by any casual violence our covenant-keeping God and Father may appoint.

Baptism means resurrection from the dead ; first, of the soul from the death of sin, as before stated ; and, second, of the body. Christ's baptism is our example to follow, Christ's life our model, Christ's humiliation and death the standard test of our loyalty to God, meekly consenting to share in "the fellowship of his

sufferings," and to be "made conformable to his death," "that we attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Thus Christ disarmed death of its terrors, in apprehension of which so many "are in bondage all their lives," by teaching his disciples that the death of his saints was simply a sleep.

The resurrection body of Jesus was "the first-fruits" of God's baptismal harvest from the regions where death "reigned from Adam" to the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb of Joseph. The first-fruits garnered is the earnest that the whole harvest of God's elect will be gathered in the same way. "If the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

Hear the inspired Paul further, "If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which

are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. . . . What shall they do, which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead? And why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" 1 Cor. xv, 16-30. Baptized for a dead Christ? What is the good of it if Christ be not risen? Baptized to fill up the decimated ranks of the sacramental host, whence martyred saints, having just drunk their cup to the dregs, have disappeared: baptized thus, to "stand in jeopardy every hour?" What is to be gained by all this if Christ be not risen? Shall we maintain our fidelity to our baptismal covenant to the death, and God fail to meet his part of the same covenant?

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order:

Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming." 1 Cor. xv, 20-23.

Baptism is the sign of all these things, so fully set forth in the example of Jesus from his baptism to his mediatorial throne. For there is but the most meager mention of Jesus till after he was baptized. Baptism is God's token to us that he will never be "slack concerning his promises to us."

The only possible contingency in the case is on our side. If we are obedient and receive Christ, and "abide in him," then the Spirit of Christ will be the same in us as in Noah. Though a world of the wicked be drowned, we will float in safety on the surface of the destroying flood. Noah's example is quoted by Peter to show what baptism will do for us if we receive it, and conform to it in its full significance, securing to us in Christ a crown of eternal glory.

IX.

MODE OF CHRIST'S BAPTISM.

DEAR BROTHER: I have no dogmatic theory to maintain in regard to baptism or its mode. The Church of which I am a minister tells me to baptize by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion; so, personally, it doesn't matter to me about the mode—whether the water be applied to the subject or the subject to the water. Moral principles are indestructible and immutable, whether mixed up with Jewish ritualism or in the clear setting of the Gospel. Heaven and earth may change and pass away, but these never; not "a jot or tittle of the law shall fail till all be fulfilled;" but ceremonial appointments, even by God, are not so. Still, I greatly prefer to let God change them, and not take that responsibility myself.

Our business now is to find out the mode

of Christ's baptism. He was baptized by water.

How was it applied? As it was in obedience to law, we must find out the law and its application. As we have already traced the law, and seen the consecration of Aaron and his sons under it, we have now only to find out whether their ceremonial washing involved the immersion of their bodies in water. If Aaron was immersed in water, then let no man ever dare to question whether or not Jesus was immersed in like manner. Aaron and his sons were washed out of the laver that "stood between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar." What sort of a baptistery was that?

Let us see. "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein. For Aaron and

his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not.” Exod. xxx, 17-21. So the laver was a brass wash-basin for the daily use of the priests. Water was “put therein,” and they washed their hands and feet “thereat,” not therein, and no washing of the body at all.

The inaugural washing of Aaron on that great day of ceremony was not, therefore, in some great font prepared for the occasion, but from a basin consecrated for daily use, and carried in the march by some stalwart son of Kohath.

Why did John take Jesus down into the river Jordan?

The long-expected “prophet like unto Moses” and his harbinger stand side by side on

the bank of the river. The work in hand was the founding of a new dispensation. The type of the Mosaic was Sinai, of the other, Sion. St. Paul compares the two. The one, with its gorgeous ritualistic display; its legalism, its formalism; its shadows, and traditions, under the type of Sinai. We leave that mountain and “come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Heb. xii, 22-24.

This dispensation, under covenant-chartered rights, ratified in heaven, and sealed by the blood of sprinkling, commands all the resources of the kingdom of grace and of glory. But all these glorious realities are spiritual and invis-

ible—the dispensation of spiritual substance, and not of shadows and show—a dispensation of but two visible sacraments, the one initiative into visible union with “the general assembly and church of the first-born,” the other commemorative of “the blood of sprinkling” and the atoning death of Him who shed it, and both are so simple as to require no material outfit more than what any weary traveler in the desert may get from his bottle of water or wallet of daily food.

In keeping with this, John carried no lavers, not even a tin cup. His costume and mode of life was that of a Bedouin Arab. Any body coming to receive baptism at the hands of that plain denizen of the desert had to “go down into the water.” No matter how steep, or how deep and slippery the bank, they had to go down, and very probably they went into the water, for those Judean highlanders were not encumbered with shoes and stockings, and they naturally took to the water when they

could get a chance by a journey to the Jordan. When I was at the Jordan, undressing for a swim, the Arabs went right in. Being a good swimmer I struck out boldly, but soon a big Bedouin Arab was trying to get between me and the rapid current, and, by gesticulations and shouts of warning, urged me to keep within safe lines. All persons at the Jordan who cannot swim must keep near shore. Thus, when the thousands went down the steep bank and into the edge of the turbulent, treacherous stream, John baptized them with water.

An application to the "hands" and "feet" of Aaron was quite sufficient, though warned that death would follow in default; so there is no evidence that John's baptism did more in the way of symbolic cleansing.

When they were baptized, the next thing was to "come up out of the water" by the way they went down.

If Jesus, therefore, fulfilled the law of Moses on the subject, he was not immersed.

If he conformed to the mode of the original institution of sprinkling at the Red Sea, he was not immersed.

The mode, first and all through, was doubtless the same; and the mode indicated all through, from Moses to Messiah, "pouring" and "sprinkling," was, as we have seen, the mode that God instituted. But the mere mode is so secondary that I would not debate with Baptist, Quaker Friend, or any body about it.

Think of an army of soldiers in front of the enemy laying down their arms to go into a wrangle about the mode of their enlistment. Different countries have different modes of enlistment, but, whatever the variety of modes, they all mean the same thing, and impose an obligation under which the soldier, at the order of the officer in command, advances and shoots down his fellow-men, or stands up as a target to be shot down himself. Who stops to talk about his enlistment or the recruiting ser-

geant who swore him in? If a Baptist brother believes that immersion is the proper mode of baptism, let him be immersed, only let him accept the baptismal covenant, with its scriptural obligations, and be true to it.

The Baptists are a good people. In the main they “ love one another,” and work for God, and send out to heathen lands earnest and successful missionaries. I love the Baptists; but their claim to Bible authority for baptism by immersion exclusively, or for a single example, is not sustained by any evidence from the Book.

They make the common clod-hoppers stare sometimes with their Greek *bapto* and *baptizo*, but even if they could prove that in their common use among the heathen they meant to dip exclusively, (which they cannot do,) that would not secure their point, for the reason that when the Holy Spirit appropriated a heathen word, though suitable for his purpose by some points of analogy, he always put a new and

spiritual meaning into it, which meaning can only be ascertained by the use he made of it. We have seen the use to which he applied the word baptize, and it does not mean immersion in any application discoverable in the Bible.

Our dear Baptist brethren try to base an argument on the case of Philip and the eunuch, because the two of them "went down into the water," and assume, of course, that one of them, at least, went under the water. But in their use of this and every example of Scripture baptism they "beg the question." Three thousand were baptized in a single afternoon of one day, in a city on a short allowance of water for quenching the thirst and ordinary cleansing and culinary requirements of the people; yet assuming in the premises that immersion is the only mode, there must have been some way by which the three thousand were put under water.

Their arbitrary substitution of the word "immerse" for the word "baptize" in their

new translation is an unwarrantable assumption, which, though it may deceive some ignorant people at home, and give trouble in mission fields abroad, it does not really help their cause.

Most people have their weak points ; I think that is theirs. But when I see Baptist soldiers doing battle for Jesus ; as I have in many lands, I say, God bless them and give them grand success in rescuing the perishing !

You Quaker Friends have a very different mode from that of other Churches of uniting a man and a woman in marriage ; but you have a mode, and you do unite them, and it is noteworthy that they are remarkable for their con-nubial fidelity.

You have your own mode of initiation into covenant visible union with the Church of God, and of monthly commemoration, neither in form like the two gospel sacraments ; but a glorious company of your people do enter into covenant union with God and maintain it,

and God accepts them, and their “uncircumcision is counted for circumcision.”

We should ever keep in mind the fact that means, however important, should ever be used to subserve, but never to supersede their end. God raised up your people at a time when the two simple sacraments instituted by the Saviour had become objects of idolatrous reverence and trust; so much so that the eternal life or death of a soul, even of an unconscious infant, was supposed to depend on a baptismal sprinkling by a man, and he, in many cases, a man who knew not God.

The honest George Fox, seeing these things, and mourning over them before God, was stirred as was Gideon when he destroyed the altar of Baal and cut down the grove of his own father's idolatry; or like Hezekiah, when he “broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made,” throwing the fragments away with the rubbish of broken-down altars of heathenism hard by the house of God, and

contemptuously shouting "Nehushtan," "a piece of brass." I wish that George had succeeded in ridding the Church of such ridiculous ideas, but they still obtain to an alarming extent.

An ordained minister in Bombay lost an infant child by rather a sudden death, and in the confusion of its brief illness it died without baptism; and he was not allowed to bury his baby in the consecrated grounds of the Church of which he was a minister. We are left to conclude that the theory of those learned and good men, as many of them certainly are, is, that through some one's forgetfulness or an error of supposing that it would not depart so soon, its soul, unwashed, had gone to eternal perdition, and therefore its unbaptized body should not be allowed to pollute the holy ground, though the receptacle of many baptized drunkards and sinners of all sorts. George could not stand such nonsense, and naturally enough, like a pendulum, swung to

an opposite extreme, and tied up there. Well, thank God ! the Lord Jesus went with him, and raised up "a peculiar people, zealous of good works," a living Church of God. God has wonderfully used the Quaker Friends as witnesses against Christian (?) idolatry in all lands. May the covenanted blessings of God, which have been so lavished upon them, and dispensed through their agency to millions outside of their own membership, ever abide with them, and may they become a thousand fold richer than ever in all spiritual graces and usefulness ! Amen.

X.

BAPTISM OF INFANTS.

DEAR BROTHER: At the foundation of this subject I raise the query, What is the relation of infant children to the covenant and kingdom of God?

St. Paul says, "As by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. v, 18.

Every child born into the world, except one, inherited a fallen, sinful nature in its soul; also the death penalty upon the body, as a small part of the destruction that sin entails, and the disabilities belonging to that penalty—all the bodily ills that flesh is heir to.

But to every child born into the world the

free gift came through the redemptive covenant and work of Christ: the free gift unto what? "To justification of life," securing to it from the moment of its birth a justified relation to God, under his baptismal covenant with man, which is the opposite of condemnation; hence the gift "of life"—spiritual and eternal life in Christ. David, from the depths of his own inner life, prophetically describing the struggles of the God-man, expresses a fact true in the history of every child born: "Thou art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art my God from my mother's belly." Psa. xxii, 9, 10. God said to Jeremiah, "Before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." These are utterances of facts common to human beings, not special and exclusive, but universal. The relationship to God, as expressed by David, is

the same with every child born into the world; the adaptation and ordination, as in the case of Jeremiah, are common to the race, but as varied as the legitimate callings of men. All such are under the personal care of the Holy Spirit; hence all dying in their infantile justified relation are washed by him in the cleansing blood of Jesus and transferred to the "kingdom of glory," where they belong. Their bodies sleep with the bodies of believing saints, and shall share with them a glorious resurrection at the call of the Lord Jesus. More than half the human race have been saved under this grand arrangement. Four of my own dear children have gone to heaven on this ticket. Glory to God!

God's free gift of justification includes all this. The Holy Spirit simply had the great boundary facts recorded, but they cover all their intermediate belongings.

Are the children also regenerated from birth, as well as justified?

I don't know. For any thing I know to the contrary, I should say that in all cases regeneration is a concomitant of justification. It is so with the penitent sinner who receives Christ, and is justified by faith. What God hath joined together, why should man put asunder?

But don't they show that they have a fallen, sinful nature?

They do, and for the good reason that they are indeed both fallen and sinful. But is not the same true of all adults justified by faith, until their inherent carnal nature is destroyed out of their hearts by the purifying work of the Holy Spirit? The little child, according to its opportunities for spiritual inquiry, will ask mother a hundred questions about God and heaven, and what sort of people live in the good world above, that the mother cannot answer, and it really exhibits as much spiritual mindedness as do ordinary Christians.

What about the bad tempers, deceit, and lies which seem so natural to them?

They proceed from their depraved nature, having been fostered by the bad examples surrounding them; but their sinfulness, though in its nature sin—"inbred sin"—does not of itself involve guilt and condemnation. Paul says in this connection, "Sin is the transgression of the law, but sin is not imputed where there is no law." There being no moral law in the mind of the child, no sin is imputed to it. Its state is covered by the atonement of Christ, from which comes the gift of life, with its supply perfectly adequate to meet every demand of the infant soul.

When it learns the law, and willfully transgresses the law, then comes the forfeiture of its justified relation; hence condemnation, bitterness, and bondage. It does not want to talk to mother now about God and heaven. It has changed masters, and gone away from home into a desert, dark and dreary. No

hope now but by repentance and acceptance of Jesus, and hence "justification by faith and peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." That is a wonderful work of grace; true, but the subject of it has simply got back home, where he belongs.

What about total depravity?

Not quite so total in Adam and Eve as in the angels who kept not their first estate, but left their probationary heaven, to return no more, but are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6.

If the sinning human pair had been so totally depraved, they would at once have gone to the same place, and the human race would not have been propagated; yet so depraved that nothing short of the incarnation, death, resurrection, mediation, and almighty power of the Son of God could rescue man from his peril, and provide a way of restoration to his home and his heaven.

The fact of our existence, therefore, is due to the atonement of Christ, and hence, proof that we are subjects of it, and sharers of its provisions. Hence, it is not at the beginning of human life that we are to look for unmixed and total depravity, but at the end of the persistent rejecters of Jesus. Such go away from home, and “waste their substance,” destroy their spiritual susceptibilities, and sink into total depravity; such, by a determined abuse of their will power, become utterly diabolized, and are sent away, as incurable nuisances, to the place prepared for the devil and his angels, because fit for no other place.

But does not the Saviour say, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Of course, there is no hope for a sinning *man* but in being born again; and the child who is in the kingdom will certainly sin and come under condemnation as soon as it crosses the lines into responsible life, unless united to

Jesus by faith, and purified by the cleansing blood, which is available as soon as it is needed, and to the full measure of the need. No child has any right to go out from home into the paths of sin for an hour; but we are bound to go out, whether children or adults, unless we abide in Christ, as the branch in the vine; hence every little branch, in every household, should be pressed to the bosom of Jesus as soon as it can lisp his precious name.

The Saviour has furnished some authoritative facts for the instruction and guidance of all parents in regard to their children.

Three evangelists make special mention of this familiar example: "They brought young children to him, that he should touch them:" (St. Matthew explains the object more fully: "that he should put his hands on them, and pray;") so it was not a mere social thing, though he was social and kind to the children;) "and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much

displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark x, 13-16.

Those children furnished the teaching model of the Master, to show the only way into "the kingdom of heaven." If we can see how those little children got in, we shall see, in their example, the way for any body to get in, and the only way in which any poor soul ever did get in.

How did they get in? 1. They were instructed concerning their disease, and the only doctor who could cure them, and brought to Jesus. 2. They were not dragged nor driven, but voluntarily "came to Jesus." In spite of all obstructive forces, within and without, they came to Jesus. 3. They just let go—let go

sin and self and father and mother, and lifted their helpless hands and hearts to Jesus—*surrendered all to him, and received him*; and he did all the rest. Their act was that of utter helplessness, but of confidence in Him who could help them. Then “he took them up in his arms”—lifted them clean off the earth. They had nothing to lean on but the bosom of Jesus. There they rested, with all their woes and wants. He put his hands upon them—his sovereign, saving power, the same now as then; “prayed for them”—his priestly mediation, just the same now; gave them their proper standing in his kingdom; “and blessed them,” with whatever they needed as subjects of his kingdom, and members of his family.

Again, see the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zachariah: “Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” He purges the house of God of a

troop of covetous worldlings, and makes room for true worshipers and returning sinners.

“And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David ; they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say?”

“And Jesus [expressing astonishment at their ignorance of the standing and chartered rights of the children in the Church of God] saith unto them, Yea ; have ye not read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise.” (Matt. xxi, 5, 15, 16.)

He never did better than that out of the mouth of Moses, or any other man. None but the “pure in heart” can with the lips render perfected praise to God, for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

Those “babes and sucklings” are set forth in the inspired record as authoritative teaching models and facts; so that all may know

without mistake, God's purpose concerning the children.

They were not nursing babes at the breast; they were old enough to accompany their mothers to the temple, and see the works and hear the words of Jesus. They were not ten years old, that is quite too old for "a sucking." As we speak of "the infant class" in the Sunday-school, so the psalmist and the Saviour associated those little children with the nursery, where they really belonged—little children from three to six years old. So God's arrangement is that all parents should know him, and by the baptism, and proper training of their children, to have them justified freely, sanctified wholly, and developed in Christian character, bomb-proof and fire-proof, before they leave the nursery. They will thus be prepared to enter upon their school-day struggles and the great battle of life. Playful as the lambs of the field, yet loyal to their King, honest and true in all their dealings with men,

they will move on with the aggressive forces of Jesus' witnesses, like a six-year-old boy, reported in the "Christian Advocate and Journal" a few years ago. His name was Arthur. A neighboring lady and her little daughter, Esther, visited Arthur's mother, and spent the day. The two little children became so interested in each other that it was agreed between the two mothers that Arthur might go home with Esther and her mamma, and spend the night.

At the hour for retiring the man-servant of the mansion said, "Come, Arthur, I'll put you to bed."

Arthur stood and, looking round inquiringly, said, "We have not had prayers yet."

Esther's rich old father was not a Christian, and had no "family altar."

There stood the little witness for Jesus, waiting for a call to prayers, when the servant said, "Come on, Arthur, I'm waiting for you."

Arthur repeated, "We haven't had prayers yet;" and, seeing no movement in that direction, he went and kneeled down at the knee of his rich host, as he was accustomed to do at home with his father, and prayed in artless simplicity. He did not say a prayer, but prayed in his own language for his dear papa and mamma, and for Esther and her dear papa and mamma, and thanked the Lord for his daily blessings to all of them. Then he kissed them good-night and retired. That unsaved father went to bed, and, as his wife said afterward, spent the night in groaning and turning over.

Next morning at breakfast he began to serve the plates, when Arthur, in all simplicity, said, "We haven't had prayers yet this morning."

That rich worldling retired to his room and prayed to God for mercy, and rested not till he found rest for his soul in Jesus. Thus is fulfilled what is written of hardened sinners,

who are compared to wolves and leopards,
“A little child shall lead them.” Isa. xi, 6.

Thus the Lord Jesus shows every parent, who will read his teaching, what to do with every child as soon as it is old enough to transgress the law, and forfeit its infantile, justified relation to God; and God will hold parents answerable to him for this duty to their children. All this is embraced in the baptismal obligations of parents, the obligation being the same whether the parents are baptized or not. The child is safe up to the period of its responsibility, and God wants every child to stay at home, and abide in safety, “under the shadow of the Almighty.”

Must they fall into sin, and taste the bitterness of guilt and condemnation?

No; bring them to Jesus before the devil has time to inclose them in his deceitful coil.

When a little child, as described, is taken into the arms of Jesus and blessed, what is its standing and moral condition?

1. Justified; 2. Regenerated. If the infantile justification had been forfeited by transgressing the law, then its justification would involve God's judicial act of acquittal and pardon. If the infantile justification had not been forfeited, then on the faith of the child its infantile justification would be confirmed by God's seal of approval, and the child receive consciously the witnessing Spirit's "seal," and "the earnest of its inheritance" in its heart.

I met a grandmother in Israel in Canada years ago—a very intelligent and influential old saint. She was, when I saw her, eighty-two years old.

I said to her, "Mother, you have known the Saviour a long time, I presume?"

"Yes, thank God! I cannot remember when I did not know him. My mother was one of Mr. Wesley's members, and Mr. Wesley taught mothers to bring their little children to Jesus, and my mother brought me to Jesus, and

taught me to be obedient to him, and to trust him to save me, when I was so little that I cannot remember when first I felt this love, and knew him as my Saviour. I joined the Wesleyan Methodist Church seventy-five years ago, when I was seven; but I knew Jesus long before that."

"Well, mother, has he preserved you from sinning all these years?"

"Yes, thank God! I never committed a willful sin in my life. I am sure if I had I should have found it out, but the Lord Jesus has sweetly saved me all these years. I have raised a large family, and have had my full share of responsibilities and trials, but Jesus has been with me, and has been a 'very present help' in every time of need, and that, with me, is all the time."

I met a similar old lady in Glasgow, Scotland, and such cases, instead of being rare exceptions to what has become a sort of orthodox rule, should be universal. But parents

who know not God know not how to bring their children to him, and parents who know him require divine light and guidance, with great diligence, which is pleasure compared with the grief which must follow its neglect.

But to return to the subject—infant baptism. If little children, by virtue of the gift of salvation in Jesus, have a standing in the kingdom of God, why not give public recognition of the fact in the Church of God? Why should not the child's name be entered in her books? God has it written down in his book of life.

Why should not its name be accompanied by a record of the fact of its solemn consecration to God by baptism, to stand as a “ seal, sign, and token ” of its covenant relations to God, and of all that the covenant involves?

But what is the use of baptizing a child? What can it know about it?

All the reason for it that God had in his mind when he, under the most solemn sanctions, required all the Jewish males to be

circumcised. As for what it can know, that depends on the attention given to God's instructions to parents on the subject of teaching the children about their covenant relations and duties to him.

On this subject God speaks of Abraham, saying, "Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Gen. xviii, 18, 19. And by Moses, saying, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and

when thou risest up." Deut. vi, 4-7. All this was so important, in God's estimate of it, that, when he enjoined circumcision and the teaching it involves on Abraham, he added those awful words: "The uncircumcised man-child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."

Not that God ever did, or ever will, punish a child for any neglect of its parents; but such a lad was thus precluded from membership in the Church of God, and also from national citizenship. He was an outcast; no Church care, no helping parental example, no training in the way he should go; a hundred probabilities against one that he would go, according to his training, in the way in which he should not go, and be shut out of heaven because unfit to enter or to dwell there. The same obligation laid on Jewish parents to circumcise their boys is equally binding upon all parents now to dedicate their children to God by baptism, and

teach them according to its broad significance, and “ command their households after them to keep the way of the Lord,” as did Abraham.

Many say, “ We let our children grow up unbaptized, and then they can choose for themselves.”

Yes, and give them such views of their importance that they readily come to believe that their obligations to God depend on their own choice, and the mass of them decline to acknowledge and conform to them, and are “ cut off ” in their sins.

I know of no argument of old in support of the obligation of Jews to circumcise their boys that does not apply with equal force to Christian parents now.

Cannot a child be trained in religion as well without the baptismal ceremony, and the record of it ?

All God’s teachings touching the principles and facts in the case, say, No, emphatically no.

It is true that some unbaptized children are

trained better than many who have been baptized. The neglect to train baptized children is criminal, and proves nothing against God's institution. The sincere parents who are doing their best to train their children without baptism labor under the disabilities of a mistake, which deprives both parents and children of a potent source of moral power.

No spot on earth has such a mysterious, enchanting charm about it for our deepest sympathies as the place of our birth. This charm follows us to old age.

I traveled with an old man, a few months ago, on his way from California to Virginia, to visit his birthplace. All the people he knew and loved there were dead or scattered abroad; but the place was there, and that was what he wanted to see once more before he should die.

The Roman Catholics know the value of binding their children to their Church by driving down their stakes near to the time

and place of each child's birth. That is why it is so difficult to undo the power of their teaching.

The heathen understand this, and hence put into the hands of every child, at a suitable age, its "horoscope," written by an astrologer at the moment and hour of the child's birth, stating what "lucky" or "unlucky star" was visible, or what conjunction of planets occurred at that time, and the god or devil to whom the babe was dedicated, and under whose invisible guardianship the child was placed by the parents. Get that man away from the bonds thus laid for him when not a day old, if you can. Missionaries spend their lives in trying to unshackle such bonds, and find it awfully hard work.

All this accords with natural parental instinct. Even good Baptist people, under the force of this instinct, call their friends together and with prayer consecrate their children to God without baptism.

I know not any thing that would affect my heart this day more than to visit the spot and open the book and read the record of my baptism when a babe in the arms of my mother. Dear mother, long since in heaven, and father, too ; but this record tells of the responsibility that rested on their hearts in having brought "a man-child into the world," and being answerable to God for his education in time for eternity. It tells me of their conscious inability to bear such responsibility alone, and hence they brought their babe into the house of God, and invoked the prayers of his people on their behalf. It tells that they realized the fact that they were not their own, and that their dear boy (their first-born) was only lent to them, and liable to be taken back at any moment by Him who lent him ; and thus they brought their boy, in the presence of the congregation, all standing in silence before the Angel of the covenant, and solemnly dedicated him to God by baptism.

I only glance at secret sources of moral power, rills that rise with the day-dawn of our existence, and run on and accumulate volume and force to bear us heavenward if utilized for God at the start, otherwise to bear us on to perdition, or oblige us to pull against the fearful current to the end of life. Thus we may get a faint idea of the mighty motive of God in locating the teaching fact and act of circumcision so near to the day of birth.

A dear friend of mine, a medical doctor in Australia, had trouble with his son John, though at that time but a lad of about fourteen years. John was a quiet, nice-looking boy, and by many parents would have been considered good enough, or as good as can be expected of boys at that age, but he was capricious, and often disobedient and always willful. The father is a majestic man, six feet four in height, with symmetrical proportions perfect, possessing, by nature and godly education, a high sense of honor, and a keen sense of re-

sponsibility in regard to the training of his children. He is an earnest working Christian, and was grieved beyond endurance over John's naughtiness and stubbornness. Having exhausted his stock of reasonings, remonstrances, and warnings on John without any appreciably good effect, he applied Solomon's remedy, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell." Prov. xxiii, 13, 14. The doctor was intent on saving the soul of his boy from hell by all means. It was a great grief of heart for him to beat his boy, for he is a loving father; but duty impelled him, and he took John to his office and beat him severely; but John was so plucky that he would not cry a whimper, and so set in his ways he would not beg for mercy, nor promise amendment. He was as dumb as a deaf-mute. The father tried repeatedly to "whip it out of him," but all without effect. Solomon's remedy acts like

a charm on the conduct of some boys, but it was not the medicine to do John any good.

Finally, in earnest pleading before God for his boy, the father got light. He immediately called John into the office, and assured him of his love for him, and then detailed a simple narrative to this effect: "John, when you were a baby but a few weeks old your mother and I took you to church and put you into the arms of the minister. He held you up and asked the congregation to pray for you, and he and they all united in prayer for you. Then he called your name John, and by baptism dedicated you to God, and the people said, Amen! This was written down in the church register."

As the father went on explaining the meaning of the transaction, as a sign of our relation to God, our consecration to God, and his covenant provisions and promises for us, and our duties to him, John wept in penitential grief, confessed his disobedience, and begged his father to pray for him. That day John

surrendered himself to God, received Christ, and was saved. Through his preparatory education in school, and his college course, he remained true to God and was preserved from the bad influences which blight the whole life of so many college students. He adopted the profession of his father, and is in every way an honor to his parents and to the Church of God to which they all belong.

That father might possibly have succeeded without the moral leverage of infant baptism, but he did succeed by that means.

XI.

SCRIPTURE AUTHORITY FOR INFANT BAPTISM.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS: A beautiful morning, this, at sea. "The north-east trade-wind" struck us last evening, so we add to steam the strength of a stiff breeze to help us on our voyage.

As I lay in my hammock last night suspended under the great foresail, swinging to and fro, I gazed at the stars and thought of home, my dear family, and of friends, and of God and heaven, and slept sweetly under "the shadow of the Almighty;" waking with the change of the "night watches," I realized that heaven was very near, but I was startled in the dead of night by loud voices and awful oaths from two firemen clinched in a furious fight with each other. Happily for their bones, as often happens with quarrelsome dogs, the barking

greatly exceeded the biting. But breaking upon me suddenly in the midnight darkness I was reminded that our habitation among men is very near to the gates of hell. God help us, like Aaron, "to stand" in the breach "between the living and the dead," and do our duty.

Well, brother, I fear I have wearied your patience, but I come now to the last letter of our series.

We often hear the challenge, accompanied with a smack of supposed triumph and real contempt, "Show us the chapter and verse authorizing the sprinkling of babies?" Such will not use the word baptize in that connection at all, but unwittingly put in the word "sprinkling," derived from God's mode of baptizing the whole host at the Red Sea, and which God had metaphorically used for ages to express the broad significance of baptism in regard to his types of atonement and cleansing from sin, as we have before shown.

If there had been a good immersionist brother among the apostles to moot that modern question, we should have had, no doubt, a definite reply on record ; but the apostles were all Jews, and the precedent of admitting children into visible covenant relation with God in their Church was based on divine authority, and backed by Church usage through a period of two thousand years, and in all that time never questioned but once, and then by an Arabian Cushite, who, though the wife of Moses, had never seen a Jewish altar or priest in her life. Her objection was not based on a sentiment or a prejudice, but was rather an instinctive gush of a mother's sympathy for her boys ; but her remonstrance was so emphatic that Moses, like many a dutiful husband I wot of, gave in ; and what was the result ? Moses was called to answer straightway. "The Lord met him, and sought to kill him," (Exod. iv, 24,) and would have done it, no doubt, if he had not circumcised his boys—a man called to command men

who had not, after all his training, learned to obey God.

Sin is felony under God's government, and "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." The law-giver got a life-long lesson on keeping the law. An obligation laid upon all Jewish parents by divine law, with its institutions of universal application, running through a period of two thousand years, and embodying a moral principle fundamental to the everlasting covenant of God with mankind; and now to talk about enjoining that principle by a new statute would have been an absurdity, unless baptism had embodied a principle and significance different from the principle and spiritual significance of circumcision. A change of that sort in the substitution of baptism for circumcision would have required a special revelation from God defining such change. And if God had changed his mind as to the suitable age for the admission of children into visible union with his Church, a special revelation would have been

given to that effect. He would have had it written down in the book that, though for two thousand years he had admitted children into visible covenant relation with himself on the eighth day from their birth, yet under the Gospel dispensation they should not be admitted till they should reach the age of ten or twelve years, or whatever advanced maturity of years he might have named. There being no such change in the mind of God, and the change in the ceremony involving no such change of the vital principle, there is, of course, no record of what never occurred. On the contrary, we have abundant proof that the principle of the Jewish law of proselytism was carried out under the Gospel.

This was the law. The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, “And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the Lord, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no

uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. One law shall be to him that is homeborn, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among you. Thus did all the children of Israel; as the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they." Exodus xii, 48-50. Thus proselytes, unless isolated bachelors without families, were inducted into the Church of God by households. A man with the patriarchal authority by God's appointment belonging to the head of a family—the nursery for the Church and the nation—and with the added moral influence that every father should have, who could not, like Abraham, "command his children and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord," was pronounced unfit for membership in the Church of God, and was, hence, kept out of it. The principle of this law and usage, with some modification, probably, in its application, was strictly carried out by the apostles. One recorded example would prove the truth of this statement, but, to settle the

question beyond any reasonable ground of doubt, some half dozen cases are recorded as illustrative examples of the apostolic method of carrying out their great commission to go into all the world, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the holy Trinity.

Thus the Philippian jailer heard the word of the Lord from the lips of Paul and Silas, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, "and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway." Acts xvi, 33.

In the city of Corinth "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Acts xviii, 8.

"The household of Stephanas" was one of the very few that Paul in person baptized. He says: "I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name. And I baptized also the household of Ste-

phanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.” 1 Cor. i, 14-17.

“I baptized also the household of Stephanas.”

That “also” is a pretty clear intimation that he baptized the households of “Crispus and Gaius.” They were, doubtless, men of families, the one being chief ruler of the synagogue, and the other having a home for the preachers, in which Paul afterward wrote his Epistle to the Romans, and hence says: “Gaius mine host, and of the whole church, saluteth you.” Rom. xvi, 23.

Gaius was not only Paul’s host, but kept open house for “the whole Church.” Paul could not refuse to baptize such a man, and such a man, according to Jewish law and precedent, would not fail to “command his household after him.”

They all knew that baptism was an inden-

turing ceremony, and lest people should think Paul was indenturing his converts to himself instead of God, and baptism being of small moment compared with preaching the Gospel, "which is the power of God unto salvation," he assigned that to some second or third rate preacher who could be spared from the front.

If baptism of itself was a regenerating, saving ceremony, it would be a pitiable showing for Paul's two years' term of Gospel ministry in Corinth, that he had got but three families saved. Or if there were any others, he had forgotten them; whereas we know that he founded in that city one of the most numerous and influential Churches of that age.

Luke details a very interesting teaching fact from an example in Philippi—"a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshiped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were

spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us." Acts xvi, 14, 15.

That was an enterprising lady, who had emigrated from Asia to Europe, and was engaged in the dry-goods trade in the city of Philippi. She was not dealing in ordinary dry goods, like most merchants in that line; she was "a seller of purple." "Purple" was her specialty, and probably her whole trade. Hence her customers were not the common people, but the nobility of that capital of a very important provincial government. She had a large establishment in the city, which she could call her own, and which became the home of the gospel preachers, and a "meeting house" for the Church of Christ in that city, and a refuge for God's persecuted servants. When Paul and Silas were beaten in the market place and cast into prison the brethren

assembled in the house of Lydia to pray, no doubt, as did all the brethren in the house of John Mark's mother, in Jerusalem, when Peter was in prison. When Paul and Silas were released and ordered to leave the city, "they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

Acts xvi, 40.

Paul and Silas knew where to find the brethren. There they were in the house, and under the protection of a heroine, who could and did stand between them and the misguided nobility and magistracy and the maddened mob. She, with open doors and brave heart, stood in the breach till God came to the rescue with an earthquake-tread and frightened the heathens into better behavior. I call special attention to Lydia because the inspired record of her baptism embodies a great teaching fact.

Thus God, instead of stopping to parley with

people who want him to explain needless details, and give his reasons for any new phase or form in the application of the immutable principles of his administration, embodies his will in a substantial example. Under the old dispensation, now receding, all the female children born of Jewish parents were, by divine right and legally, parties to the covenant by virtue of the circumcision of their fathers. The Gospel dispensation, now inaugurated, incorporated all the moral principles of all foregoing dispensations, with new revelations, and a divine illumination and expansive force of application that would "burst the old bottles" of Judaism. Hence "new bottles," suited in capacity and elasticity to exhaustless resources of supply in Christ, and the demands of all "the nations of the earth."

Among the new modes of applying old principles we find that females are baptized into visible covenant relationship to God and his Church just the same as males, and required

to bring their “households” with them, as did Abraham and all the men who had been gathered into the Church of God for two thousand years.

“ Show us the chapter and verse authorizing such a change.”

We have shown the authoritative teaching fact, which the Lord considered sufficient, and which carries more weight with it than a dozen statutes without an example. Statutes, however needful, are too narrow, shallow, and weak to contain or convey the full meaning and teaching power of God’s primary facts.

Thus females, regardless of age, are eligible to baptism, and all that it involves, on the same footing as the males.

If Jewish females inherited their legal rights and standing in the Church of God by virtue of the circumcision of the eight-day-old baby boys, who in maturity became their fathers, now that such a standing under the Gospel is not inherited in that way, but by personal bap-

tism, they may surely, under God's appointment, be brought to Jesus in baptism as early in the morning of life as the circumcision of the Jews.

"You have no doubt, then, about your right to baptize a child?"

No. It is the only subject about which I can have no doubt about its true relation to God and fitness for baptism.

"Would you baptize an unconverted man?"

No; not if I knew the fact. I would try and lead him to Christ—get him saved first.

"Would you baptize a man at his request who had been baptized in infancy?"

I would rather convince him that the covenant obligations of one baptism unfulfilled were enough for any soul to carry to the judgment; with a pardon for such delinquency, and future and final fidelity to his baptismal covenant, no further ceremonial forms are necessary.

A demand for rebaptism involves a reflec-

tion on the validity of the first, whereas the blame belongs to the subject, and the honesty essential to true repentance will lead him to confess it.

“ But suppose the first baptism should be defective through an adverse ‘*intention*’ on the part of the priest administering it ? ”

Being a ceremony, and not of itself a “re-generating” or saving work, its validity depends on the intention, or the future conduct of the subject, and not on the intention of the administrator. If a soldier is enlisted according to law, and a proper record of it made, who would ever stop to inquire about the intention of the recruiting sergeant ? On the other hand, for a man after enlistment to refuse to appear in the ranks or obey orders, and try to claim rations, pay, and pension on the ground of his enlistment, such a man would be court-martialed and shot.

Your brother in Jesus, W. TAYLOR.

STEAMSHIP BESSEL, Aug. 27, 1880.

P. S.—To-morrow is the anniversary of my spiritual birth-day. Thirty-nine years ago, including to-morrow, I was justified by faith and obtained peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by him, through faith, “stand in that grace.” I was four years at the start learning and applying the second great lesson as taught at “Marah;” the other three great lessons taught in “the wilderness of sin” and “Rephidim,” are matter of daily experience with me. The last work of this thirty-ninth year of my Christian life is this little volume of letters to you. The writing has been a means of great blessing to my spirit, as I trust the reading will be to all who will carefully ponder what I have written. W. T.

THE END.

